

USAFE TAPS INTO ORGANIC RESOURCES, BRINGING
RAMSTEIN AIR BASE INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Willkommen zum



KABELFEST



Courtesy photos

Equipment and supplies waiting to be installed. The team faced some logistical problems, however, they overcame their storage problems by using an old hardened shelter and erecting some tents.

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RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — There are many challenges facing communications warriors in the current “do more with less” environment. Transformation, funding and manning cuts, and technology’s current pace of change all contribute to our need to develop innovative solutions.

So how do Air Force’s communications experts deal with these challenges when faced with implementing critical systems and infrastructure

while ensuring highest quality efficiency?

In the Headquarters United States Air Forces in Europe Communications and Information Directorate, these challenges are addressed by fully leveraging the capabilities of Air National Guard Engineering and Installation teams.

The benefits of using the Guard paid off significantly during a local \$2.5 million cable project called Kabelfest 2005. This team effort involved 70 specialists from 16 different ANG units deploying to Ramstein to take on the project.

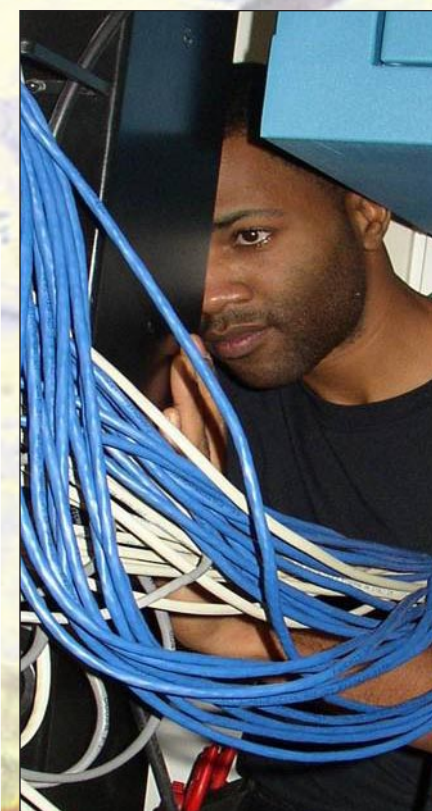
They were tasked to install more

than two million feet of in-house cabling within 19 buildings. These improvements were aimed at providing critical comm capabilities for USAFE first responders, logistics and force protection customers, to name a few.

Chief Master Sgt. Jack Davis of the 216th EIS, and Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Beavers of the 241st EIS, led the combined ANG communications and civil engineering teams, with logistics support provided by the 1st Communications Maintenance Squadron out of Kapaun, Germany.

CHALLENGES ABOUND

There were many challenges presented by a project of this size and the team experienced the first one enroute to Ramstein. The team had coordinated dedicated military airlift for their personnel and materials to save money. However, their flight to Ramstein was diverted and the team, and their materials, landed at Rhein Main AB, Germany—an hour away. This created an obvious logistical problem of getting more than 40 tons of material to Ramstein. The lead project manager, the 435th Communications Squadron’s Senior Airman Patrick Walsh, and the USAFE CSS lead, Staff Sgt. Ginger Adkins, contracted six tractor-trailers to deliver the materials and keep the project timeline on-schedule. The total amount of space required to store the materials was so large, the equipment had to be stored in an old hardened aircraft shelter. The team also built four large tents in the snow, then relocated and re-palletized the overflow of project material into the tents. Early coordination was critical to the success of the project due to the volume of customers. The team



Kablefest brought together E&I specialists from 16 different Air National Guard units. Working as a total team, they wired 19 buildings and put down more than two million feet of cable.



» Roughly 2,300 Air Force E&I specialists now reside within the Air National Guard. They’ve completed projects in Germany and the states, but it doesn’t stop there. The Guard currently has 38 steady state AEF positions and they’ve recently installed two 45-foot towers in Afghanistan supporting the Predator.

JARGON WATCH

» **HARDENED SHELTER:** A concrete bunker used as an aircraft hangar
» **AEF:** Air Expeditionary Force
» **SMARTOPS 21:** The best parts of several efficiency programs used to develop an Air Force-unique process improvement program

had to coordinate building access, which was difficult at times due to the varying mission requirements and customer availability. This resulted in teams working both day and night to keep the project on schedule.

HARD WORK EQUALS SUCCESS

After 150 days and more than 45,000 hours later, the project was complete.

The team’s work allowed the transition to standardize telephone systems, reduce maintenance requirements on outdated technologies and pave the transition to single-line telephone configuration directed by HQ USAF.

Also, several facilities did not have enough wiring to provide voice and data communications proportional to the number of people in the building. The facility cabling installed by the team enabled Ramstein to use the limited building space on the base. Finally, the additional bandwidth provided by the new cable puts Ramstein on track for its transition to Net-Centric operations, convergence of voice and video over internet protocol and future reliance on the Air Force Portal as Air Force programs migrate to the SmartOps21 environment.

As our reliance on communications capabilities continues to increase, and funding and manning continue to decrease our total numbers, it’s critical the Air Force fully leverage its available E&I resources in the most efficient ways possible.

No matter what the situation, E&I teams and comm installers are ready to develop and implement superior communication capabilities that enhance not only the operational mission but also the well-being and morale of its personnel in the field.